

What is claimed is:

1. A method for increasing peer privacy, comprising:

forming a path from a provider to a requestor by selecting a plurality of peers in response to receiving a request for information;

5 updating a table on each peer of said plurality of peers with a respective path index entry for said information;

transmitting a message to said requestor through said plurality of peers, said message comprising said information and a path index for said information from said provider; and

10 determining a next peer according to said path for said information by searching said table of each peer of said plurality of peers with said path index as an index into said table.

2. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

15 retrieving an identity of said next peer according to said path for said information and a respective index peer of said next peer;

encrypting said path index with a public key of said respective index peer of said next peer to form a next state of said path index; and

transmitting a new message with said information and said next state of said 20 path index as said path index to said next peer.

3. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

receiving said request for information at a directory;

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determining an availability of said information; and  
notifying said requestor of a determination of non-availability.

4. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:  
5 receiving said request for information at a directory;  
determining an availability of said information; and  
generating an encryption key in response to a determination of said  
availability.

10 5. The method according to claim 4, further comprising:  
determining a first next peer from said provider and a respective index peer for  
said first next peer according to said path; and  
encrypting a reference to said information, said first next peer, and said  
respective index peer of said first next peer with said encryption key.

15 6. The method according to claim 5, wherein said encryption key is generated  
according to a DES encryption algorithm.

7. The method according to claim 5, further comprising:  
20 encrypting said encryption key with a public key of said requestor;  
encrypting said encryption key with a public key of said provider;  
forming a provider message, wherein said provider message comprises:  
said encryption key encrypted with said public key of said requestor;

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said encryption key encrypted with said public key of said provider;  
said encrypted reference; and  
said encrypted first next peer and said respective first index peer; and  
transmitting said message to said provider.

10 8. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:  
forming a respective path message to each peer of said plurality of peers, said  
respective path message comprising said respective path index entry.

15 9. The method according to claim 8, wherein said respective path index entry  
comprises an identity of a next peer according to said path, a respective index peer for said  
next peer, and an index entry.

20 10. The method according to claim 8, wherein said identity of next peer according  
to said path and said respective index peer for said next peer are encrypted with a public key  
of a peer receiving said respective path message.

11. The method according to claim 8, wherein said index entry is formed  
according to {  $public_{b_h} \{ \dots public_{b_h} (public_{b_{j_0}} (n)) \dots \}$  }, where  $b_j$  represents said respective index  
20 peer.

12. A method of transmitting information, comprising:  
5 updating a respective table of each peer of a plurality of peers with a respective  
path index entry in response to receiving a path formation message containing said respective  
path index entry;  
receiving a message comprising said information and a path index; and  
forwarding said information to a next peer in response to a determination of  
said next peer from said table with said path index as a search index into said table.

10 13. The method according to claim 12, further comprising:  
forming a next state of said path index by encrypting said path index with a  
public key of a respective index peer of said next peer;  
15 forming a new message with said information and said next state of said path  
index as said path index; and  
transmitting said new message to said next peer.

14. The method according to claim 12, further comprising:  
determining an availability of information in response to receiving a request  
for information from a requestor; and  
20 notifying said requestor of a determination of non-availability.

15. The method according to claim 12, further comprising:  
determining an availability of information in response to receiving a request  
for information from a requestor; and

forming a path through a plurality of peers with a provider as a beginning of said path to said requestor in response to a determination of availability.

16. The method according to claim 15, further comprising:

5 generating an encryption key;  
determining a first next peer from said provider according to said path and a respective index peer to said first next peer;  
encrypting a reference to said information, said first next peer and said respective index peer with said encryption key; and  
10 transmitting a retrieval message to said provider, said message comprises:  
said encrypted reference;  
said encrypted first next peer;  
said encrypted respective index peer of said first next peer;  
a value of a message counter for said information;  
15 said encryption key encrypted with a public key of said provider; and  
said encryption key encrypted with a public key of said requestor.

17. The method according to claim 15, wherein said generation of said encryption key utilizes a DES encryption algorithm.

18. The method according to claim 15, further comprising:  
receiving said second message at said provider;  
applying a complementary key to said public key of said provider to said  
obtain said encryption key; and

5 applying said encryption key to said encrypted reference to retrieve said  
reference.

19. The method according to claim 18, further comprising:  
retrieving said information based on said decrypted reference;  
10 encrypting said information with said encryption key;  
forming said message, wherein said message comprises:  
said encrypted information;  
encryption key encrypted with a public key of said requestor; and  
said path index formed by encrypting said value of message counter  
15 with a public key of said respective index peer of said first next peer; and  
transmitting said message to said first next peer according to said path.

20. The method according to claim 12, further comprising:  
receiving said message at said requestor;  
20 applying a complementary key to said public key of said requestor to said  
encryption key encrypted with said public key of said requestor to obtain said encryption key;  
applying said encryption key to said encrypted reference to retrieve said  
information.

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21. A method of increasing peer privacy, comprising:
  - selecting a path for information from a provider to a requestor through a plurality of peers in response to a received request for said information; and
  - receiving a respective set-up message at each peer of said plurality of peers,
- 5 wherein said respective set-up message comprises a predetermined label and an identity of a next peer for said information according to said path.
22. The method according to claim 21, further comprising:
  - 10 updating a table with said predetermined label and said identity of a next peer for said information according to said path.
23. The method according to claim 22, further comprising:
  - 15 receiving a message, wherein said message comprises:
    - an encryption key encrypted with a public key of said requestor;
    - 10 said information encrypted with said encryption key; and
    - a message label; and
  - retrieving said identity of next peer from said table in response to said message label matching said predetermined label in said table.
- 20 24. The method according to claim 23, further comprising:
  - 15 encrypting said label with a public key of said next peer;
  - reformatting said message with said label encrypted with said public key of said next peer as said label; and

transmitting said message to said next peer.

25. The method according to claim 23, further comprising:  
comparing said identity of said next peer with a current peer;  
decrypting said encryption key encrypted with a public key of said requestor in  
5 response to said identity of said next peer being said current peer; and  
decrypting said information encrypted with said encryption key.

26. The method according to claim 23, further comprising:  
generating an encryption key;  
10 encrypting said encryption key with a public key of said requestor;  
encrypting said encryption key with a public key of said provider; and  
encrypting a transaction identifier, a reference for said information, and a first  
next peer according to said path with said encryption key.

15 27. The method according to claim 26, further comprising:  
forming a retrieval message comprising:  
said encryption key encrypted with said public key of said requestor;  
said encryption key encrypted with said public key of said provider;  
20 said transaction identifier, said reference for said information, and said  
first next peer according to said path encrypted with said encryption key; and  
transmitting said retrieval message to said provider.

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28. The method according to claim 27, further comprising:  
applying a complementary key of said provider to said encryption key  
encrypted with said public key of said provider; and  
decrypting said reference for said information, said transaction identifier, and  
5 said first next peer.

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29. The method according to claim 28, further comprising:  
retrieving said information based on said reference for said information;  
encrypting said information with said encryption key; and  
forming a message label based on said transaction identifier.

30. The method according to claim 29, further comprising:  
forming a message including said encrypted information and said message  
label; and  
15 transmitting said message to said first next peer.

31. A system for increasing peer privacy, comprising:  
a plurality of peers, each peer capable of initiating, conducting and terminating  
a communication session;  
20 a network configured to interconnect said plurality of peers;  
a directory configured to interface with said network; and  
a peer privacy module configured to be executed by said directory, wherein  
said peer privacy module is configured to select a path for information from a provider to a  
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requestor through a selected group of peers of said plurality of peers in response to a request from said requestor and said peer privacy module is also configured to transmit a plurality of set-up messages to respective peers of said selected group of peers over said network, each set-up message comprising of a label and an identity of a next peer for said information based 5 on said path.

32. The system according to claim 31, wherein said peer privacy module is further configured to form a retrieval message in response to a determination of an availability of said information.

10 33. The system according to claim 32, wherein said peer privacy module is further configured to generate an encryption key.

15 34. The system according to claim 33, wherein said retrieval message comprises: said encryption key encrypted with a public key of said requestor; said encryption key encrypted with a public key of said provider; and a transaction identifier, a reference for said information, and a first next peer according to said path encrypted with said encryption key.

20 35. The system according to claim 31, wherein each peer of said plurality of peers is configured to update a hash table with said label, said respective set-up message of said plurality of set-up messages and said identity of next peer according to said path.

36. The system according to claim 35, wherein each peer of said plurality of peers is adapted to receive a message from another peer, retrieve a received label from said message, and to search said hash table with said received label as a search index.

5 37. The system according to claim 36, wherein each peer of said plurality of peers is configured to retrieve a next peer according to said path based on said received label.

38. A system for increasing peer privacy, comprising:  
a plurality of peers, each peer capable of initiating, conducting and terminating  
10 a communication session;  
a network configured to interconnect said plurality of peers;  
a directory configured to interface with said network, wherein said directory is also configured to transmit a plurality of setup messages over said network based on a path for information requested from a provider to a requestor through a group of peers selected  
15 from said plurality of peers; and  
a peer privacy module configured to be executed by each peer of said plurality of peers, wherein said peer privacy module is adapted to receive a respective set-up message comprising of a label and an identity of a next peer according to said path.

20 39. The system according to claim 38, wherein said peer privacy module is configured to update a hash table with said label said respective set-up message of said plurality of set-up messages and said identity of next peer according to said path.

40. The system according to claim 39, wherein said peer privacy module is adapted to receive a message from another peer, retrieve a received label from said message, and to search said hash table with said received label as a search index.

5 41. The system according to claim 40, wherein said privacy module is configured to retrieve a next peer according to said path based on said received label.

42. A method of increasing peer privacy, comprising:

forming a path for information from a provider to a requestor through a

10 plurality of peers in response to a received request for said information; transmitting to each peer of said plurality of peers a respective set-up message comprising of a predetermined label and an identity of a next peer for said information; and transferring said information over said path in a message by determining a next peer according to said path by matching a message label included in said message to said 15 predetermined label.